AT THIS PHASE IN YOUR REHABILITATION, YOUR AMPUTATION SHOULD HAVE HEALED SUFFICIENTLY AND YOU MAY BE USING A PROSTHETIC DEVICE. IF SO, DAILY INSPECTION OF AND CARE FOR THE SKIN ON YOUR RESIDUAL LIMB IS ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS WITH YOUR PROSTHESIS. MINOR CUTS, BLISTERS AND RASHES CAN QUICKLY BECOME MORE THAN AN ANNOYANCE IF THEY LIMIT YOUR WEARING OF YOUR PROSTHESIS.

**Daily Skin Care**

1. Every day, or more often if necessary, wash your residual limb with a mild or antibacterial soap and lukewarm water. Rinse thoroughly with clean water to remove all soap.
2. Dry your skin by patting it with a towel. Be sure your residual limb is completely dry before putting on your prosthesis. Allowing 15 minutes of air-drying before applying your prosthesis should ensure that the skin is thoroughly dry.
3. Consult your prosthetist before using moisturizing creams or lotions. Vaseline or petroleum-based lotions degrade some types of prosthetic liners. Only use softening lotions when your skin is at risk of cracking or peeling. If a moisturizing lotion is needed, it is best to apply it at night or at other times when you will not be wearing your prosthesis. Do not apply lotions to any open area.
4. If needed, applying an antiperspirant roll-on deodorant to the residual limb can help you control odor and perspiration. Do not apply antiperspirant to any open area.
5. Do not use alcohol-based products on your residual limb; they dry out the skin and can contribute to cracking or peeling.
6. Do not shave your residual limb; pressure from the prothetic socket on “stubble” can cause the hair to grow inward, become painful, and, in the worst cases, even become infected. Never use chemical hair removers on your residual limb.
Later on, most amputees find daily inspection sufficient for the early identification of skin problems. 

3. Inspect all areas of your residual limb. Remember to inspect the back of your residual limb and all skin creases and bony areas.

4. Look for any signs of skin irritation, blisters or red marks that do not fade within 10 minutes of removing your prosthesis. Report any unusual skin problems to a member of your rehabilitation team.

Daily Foot Care
For lower-extremity amputees, it is important to maintain the health of your remaining foot. This is especially important if you have diabetes or if you have decreased circulation or sensation in your lower extremities.

Your Daily Routine Should Include The Following:
1. Wash and dry your foot properly: Use a mild soap, rinse thoroughly, and dry your skin by blotting or patting, making sure to dry between your toes.

2. Inspect your foot daily: Check for blisters, cuts and cracking.

3. Protect your foot from injury: Wear shoes or slippers at all times, and check your shoes every time you put them on for tears, rough edges or sharp objects.

Perspiration
Perspiration may increase following an amputation for a couple of reasons. One reason has to do with decreased body surface following an amputation. You may be perspiring the same amount, but it is concentrated over a smaller body surface. Another reason is that during prosthetic use, your residual limb is encased in a completely or partially airtight socket that does not allow sweat to evaporate. In most cases, daily bathing and the application of an antiperspirant is sufficient to control this. If odor or heavy perspiration continues to bother you, discuss other available treatment options with your physician.

—by Paddy Rossbach, President/CEO, Amputee Coalition of America

PROFILE: FORMER SENATOR MAX CLELAND

Past Achievements:
1970 – Elected to Georgia State Senate. As youngest member and only Vietnam veteran, he wrote law making Georgia public facilities accessible to seniors and people with disabilities.
1975 – Hired to work for Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.
1977 – Appointed to head the Veterans Administration (VA). Cleland managed the GI Bill, the VA Home Loan Guaranty program and the VA Hospital program. Also instituted the Vets Center program to provide psychological counseling to veterans.
1996 – Elected to U.S. Senate.

Author of Going for the Max! 12 Principles for Living Life to the Fullest and Strong at the Broken Places.

Current Activities:
December 2003 – Sworn in as member of the board of directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

Awards: Bronze Star for Meritorious Service; Silver Star for Gallantry in Action.

Quote: “I am a firm believer that hard work, determination and faith in yourself will allow you to accomplish whatever you desire.” – Former Senator Max Cleland

“I have been privileged to spend much of my life in the company of heroes. I have never known a greater one than Max Cleland.” – Senator John McCain